

# **Fiscal Services Division**

## **Legislative Services Agency**

### **Fiscal Note**

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HF 374 - Various Veterans Affairs and Veterans Benefits (LSB 1857 HV)  
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Fiscal Note Version – HV.1

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#### **Description**

House File 374 relates to veterans issues, including the application of interest earnings of the Veterans Trust Fund, permitting an increase in a County Commission of Veterans Affairs per diem, and increasing the number of disabled veterans eligible for a reduced cost lifetime hunting and fishing license combination. The Bill also provides that the Veterans Trust Fund not revert at the end of a fiscal year and that the Department of Public Health create a Hepatitis C Awareness Program for veterans.

#### **Background**

**Veterans Trust Fund:** The interest earned from the deposits in the Veterans Trust Fund would not impact General Fund revenues. For FY 2005, \$1.0 million was appropriated from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund for the Trust Fund.

**Veteran Commissioners Per Diem:** Permitting a County Commission of Veterans Affairs to increase the per diem would not impact the General Fund. Chapter 35B, Code of Iowa, provides for the County Commissions, with either three or five members, a \$25.00 per monthly meeting per diem. The expenditures are paid from the county's budget.

**Hepatitis C Awareness Program:** The Department of Public Health is required to create a Hepatitis C Awareness Program for veterans. The Department plans to exceed the requirements in the Bill. The assumptions and fiscal impact reflect the actual cost for the requirements in the Bill.

The Bill requires the Department to distribute information to veterans relating to certain facts regarding Hepatitis C and presenting treatment options and procedures for veterans to follow when desiring a medical consultation. The Bill requires the Department to cooperate with veterans' entities to distribute the information. A report is required in January 2007.

The Department of Public Health is receiving federal funds relating to Hepatitis but the Awareness Program in the Bill is beyond the scope of the federal funding. To implement the Bill, the Department of Public Health plans to acquire and analyze incidence and geographic information, provide training to health care providers regarding transmission, treatment, testing, prevention, and referral information regarding Hepatitis by providing written material and travel expenditures. The Department plans to reinstate and expand a previously created Viral Hepatitis Task Force to meet quarterly to assist the Department in development of the information and training.

#### **Assumptions**

**Hunting and Fishing Licenses:** Increasing the number of disabled veterans eligible for a reduced cost lifetime hunting and fishing license combination by the inclusion of peacetime veterans and not requiring service during a time of conflict would not impact the General Fund. Fees from these licenses are deposited into the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund.

- The same percentage (10.0%) applying and receiving a reduced cost license of those currently eligible would apply and receive the reduced cost license from the inclusion of peacetime disabled veterans. There are an estimated 4,400 additional peacetime disabled

veterans that would be eligible, with an estimated 440 applying for this benefit. The assumption is that 220 of these would currently purchase licenses without the reduced cost benefit.

- If the applicant's average age is 40 years old, and the average Iowan lifespan is 77.3 years of age, there could be 37.3 years of impact. The assumption used is 20 years of impact.
- The annual applications from the existing eligible pool of 23,694 veterans are 250. The assumption used is the same 1.0% each year for the additional eligibles, or 4 licenses per year after the first year of 440 applicants.
- The current annual cost of the license is \$42.00. The lifetime reduced license fee is \$30.

Hepatitis C: To meet the Bill's requirements, the Department will need a 0.25 to 0.50 FTE position to gather Hepatitis factual information regarding treatment options and procedures for veterans to follow when seeking a medical consultation and to cooperate with the specified veterans entities in distributing that information.

### **Fiscal Impact**

General Fund Impact:

Additional costs to the Department of Public Health would be a partial FTE position and development and distribution of written information for the Hepatitis C Awareness Program. This would be \$35,000 without the training and Task Force.

Non-General Fund Impact:

Local: Impact upon a county budget which may have a County Commission of Veterans Affairs that meets monthly would result in an increased cost to that county. An increase of \$5.00 per monthly meeting per diem for a three-member Commission would be \$180 per year and if all 99 counties had three-member Commissions that met monthly, the annual cost would be \$18,000. An increase of \$25.00 per monthly meeting for a five-member Commission would be an increase of \$1,500 per year and if all 99 counties had five-member Commissions that met monthly, the annual cost would be \$149,000 to county budgets.

Other: Impact upon the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund from the additional reduced cost lifetime hunting and fishing licenses would depend upon the number of participants.

- First year annual revenue to the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund would increase from \$9,240 to \$13,200 or an increase of \$3,960.
- Second year annual revenue to the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund would decrease from \$9,240 to \$120, or a reduction of \$9,120.
- Ten year cumulative impact to the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund would be a decrease of \$78,000.

### **Sources**

Department of Natural Resources

Commission of Veterans Affairs through the Department of Natural Resources

Department of Public Health

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

March 14, 2005

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The fiscal note and correctional impact statement for this bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and pursuant to Section 2.56, Code of Iowa. Data used in developing this fiscal note and correctional impact statement are available from the Fiscal Services Division, Legislative Services Agency to members of the Legislature upon request.

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